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A Soviet defector's

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WASHINGTON — Arkady Nikolayevich Shevchenko is the highest ranking Soviet official ever to defect to the West. In April, 1978, he resigned his position as undersecretary general of the United Nations, repudiated his Soviet citizenship, and took up residence in the United States. Since then, he has been engaged in extensive writing and research.

Shevchenko held his UN post from 1973 to 1978. He was in charge of political and Security Council affairs, and held administrative responsibility for disarmament and many other political matters. He represented the secretary general at a number of major international conferences and meetings.

At the outset of the interview, Shevchenko emphasized that he "never, (has) been a KGB officer or worked with the KGB." His information about Soviet intelligence activities, he said, resulted "because of my position" in which he "had ample opportunity to observe its operations. I knew most of the people who were working in the KGB when I worked in the Soviet mission to the UN, or as UN undersecretary general. . . . I was adviser to Gromyko, I worked with Brezhnev, I was at the center of the media and I knew a lot of the KGB people because of my observations."

Q — What is your estimate of the percentage of personnel in the Soviet mission who are (a) directly involved, and (b) indirectly involved because they are used, perhaps sometimes, without their knowledge?

A — At least about 50 per cent, from 50 to 60 per cent of the people, one way or another, are working for Soviet intelligence. And, of course, there is also a counterintelligence, because they even follow all the Soviets who work abroad.

Q — Is surveillance of Soviet personnel in the UN mission a function of the KGB, or is it a counterintelligence function?

A — Counterintelligence is a KGB operation. Unlike the United States, where you have the different agencies for different things — like the CIA, FBI, or the Secret Service — the KGB is responsible for all these things. They just have different directorates. The second directorate is mainly for counterintelligence. They even follow their own fellow comrades from the first directorate who are dealing with other things. They're also following the GRU (military intelligence). They even follow the Soviet ambassador to the UN.

Q — What would you say would be the primary purpose of an intelligence officer stationed in the United States?

A — They have several objectives. Among them, the gathering of information is priority. It's on top of everything. Military, political, economic information, and assessment of the political situation in the U.S. Every year, a lot of people come from many countries for the sessions of the General Assembly — prime ministers, foreign ministers, and a lot of important people. The United Nations is a unique place where they can contact or recruit some of the people from other nations to get information where they cannot have a big operation themselves, because of the small size of their embassies in those countries, or not having diplomatic relations.

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ferent Soviet bodies or agencies. The International Department of the Central Committee of the Party does it through the communist parties affiliated with them.

Q — They use the local Communist Party apparatus of each country for disinformation purposes? This involves both the Communist Party and its front organizations, like the World Peace Council?

A — Exactly. The World Peace Council is absolutely a pro-Soviet organization, which has been doing what the Soviets want. The Novosti Press Agency is doing a lot of disinformation activities and is not formally a part of the KGB.

A — But would you say the KGB in reality, even though it may not be formally a part, exercises control over these activities?

A — It is not the KGB which decides everything in the Soviet Union. This is misunderstood in the West. The real power belongs to the Central Committee and the Politburo. Novosti cooperates closely with the KGB because the KGB has a disinformation operation which is more shrewd and much more dangerous than Novosti.

The Soviet disinformation apparatus prepares material which even contains some critical things about the Soviet Union, to make their propaganda more credible to the West.

Q — Who prepares this? The KGB?

A — Sometimes it's been prepared by Novosti in cooperation with the Foreign Ministry or the KGB. I myself, personally, participated once in a while in this exercise.

In the early '60s, the Soviets wanted to publish a book on disarmament. They wanted to promote the idea that the Soviet Union is the champion of disarmament, and at the same time show how militaristic and against everything the United States was.

The KGB asked me and Ambassador Lev Mendeleovich to write the disinformation book, which we did. Later, it was published in the West under someone else's name. Novosti just had been established and they found someone in the West with a proper reputation, for which he was paid. I think they published it in several countries. I've never seen it, because they changed the titles and all kinds of things.

Q — Did this person know he was working from a text that had been provided by the Soviet Union?

A — Certainly. How could it be otherwise, if someone had given him the manuscript? Of course, maybe he made suggestions, "let's do that better in that way," or something like that.

Q — What is the Soviet reaction to the restrictions that have been placed on the U.S. intelligence agencies since 1974?

A — They're most happy about that. The more U.S. intelligence is restricted, the more opportunity or possibilities the KGB or GRU have to do whatever they want because the only power in this country, or in any other country, to face the KGB are the intelligence agencies. In the United States, this is either the CIA or FBI. And the more they are restricted in their activities, the less they can do against the Soviets. So Soviet intelligence was very happy to see that the image of the CIA went down because of a campaign against the CIA in the United States.